

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL OF POPULAR LITERATURE

Science and Art.

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 337.

SATURDAY, JUNE 16, 1860.

PRICE 1½d.

UP AND DOWN REGENT STREET.

It is three o'clock in the afternoon in the first week of spring, under a glorious sky without a cloud, and the warm sun, after a weary absence, sheds once more his laughing beams along the highways and byways of our bustling Babylon, of late so moist, misty, and dank. The weather has taken a sudden leap from bleak and foul to warm and fair, and the world of West London, which has for months past been preserving its fair complexion, and nursing its bronchial tube on easy-chairs and fireside settees impenetrable to the fore east wind, is free to take wing, and gambol and disport itself in the welcome sunshine. Regent Street, at this fashionable morning-hour, the dawn of the aristocratic day, is the Boulevard Italien of London, minus the long rows of trees and saplings, the estaminets and restaurants—and plus some five hundred of the brilliant equipages of the English nobility and gentry, whose full-fed prancing steeds and rear-guards of tall footmen throng the broad route, and retard the ordinary circulation of the traffic. The carriages of the dowagers and heiresses, some of them filled to overflowing with one solitary beauty, whose face and bust rise out of a mountain of crinoline like the cross of St Paul's surmounting the dome, stand three deep in front of the monster emporiums, which, taking the place of shops, characterise this locality. Most of the vehicles are, however, empty, the fair occupants having vanished within the vast shrines, where, with untiring devotion, they worship hour after hour. Meanwhile, for the special accommodation of their liveried body-guards, benches are ranged along the kerb, or right and left of the broad entrances to those ample carpeted saloons—and there they sit in a kind of pensive, dumb dignity and semi-abstraction, but yet with a conscious eye to the conduct and condition of their calves. Sometimes you see, in addition to these domestic appendages of the visitors, a guard of honour proper to the establishment itself, in the shape of a Crimean hero, medalled, bi-medalled, or tri-medalled, and perhaps lacking a limb or two in addition—realising the reward of valour and patriotism, won at the cannon's mouth, in the honourable vocation of circulating puffs for the Messrs Goose and Goldenegg.

You are amazed as you look through the walls of crystal which flank the causeways, at the lavish stores of wealth within, and wonder what is to become of it all. Cataracts of costly fabrics stream down from the lofty roof; the elaborate marvels of the loom and needle hem you in on all sides; there are Niagars of glossy satin and figured silk, whole

battalions of marshalled mantles, stately phalanxes of shawls from Cashmere, groves of lace-work and embroidery, and ten thousand et ceteras which are mysteries to the mind of the casual spectator; while a crowd of white-cravated ministers flit about hither and thither at the bidding of the votary, and in accents of bland obsequiousness, endeavour to guide her wavering choice, and calm the interesting perplexities which ruffle her angelic temper.

Pass on but a few paces, and the scene is changed to one of dazzling lustre—a mass of gems and jewels, backed by a stalactite cavern of bright red gold, flashes upon the sight—the pearl, the emerald, the diamond, the ruby glitter and gleam in their curiously carved settings, and piles of wealth, each of which it would take a life of honest labour to earn, lie scattered in careless profusion, as though they were things of nought. Do you happen to want a pin for a hundred guineas? or a bracelet for a thousand? or any other pretty little trifle for the idol of your heart? If not, pass on, and let the golden sunshine out and fascinate the owner of a heavier purse than yours. Ha! what is here? A consumptive lass, with hectic cheek and large, sunken, long-lashed eyes, seated on a noble steed, and clad in a riding-habit depending almost to the ground. You might fancy that both horse and rider are alive, and the latter not likely to live long, so cunningly modelled are both the figures—though both of them owe their existence to the necessity of impressing the public with the superiority of a shopkeeper's wares. A little further on, and you come upon a companion to the consumptive lady, in the effigy of a red-jacketed hunter bestriding his bay steed, and in the act of starting after the hounds. A pleasanter sight than either is this rock-and-moss-encircled lake, where fairy barks are sailing about, where the gold and silver fishes swim at large, occasionally visiting their friends at a distance, where lively fountains play and spout, where beautiful Eve, recumbent in the moss, looks from her green covert into the crystal mirror below, contemplating her marble charms, and where a number of hydraulic marvels, which we should not solve in a twelvemonth's gazing, fill us with pleasing astonishment. Whence come those endless globes rising everlastingly in that crystal column, and where do they all go to? What motive-power sends that revenue-cutter perpetually on her cruise round the lake? and why, having no pilot on board, does she not run foul of the projecting crags? How is that jolly-faced burgomaster, who keeps revolving in the air, and bobbing and nodding to us as we look on, kept in a state of perpetual revolution? We can answer none of these questions. All we know is, that the

lady of the lake—and of the shop—sells filters, and that this charming display is all created for the sole purpose of fixing that fact in your mind.

Lo! here is a temple of harmony—if it be not an asylum for deranged musical instruments—where the tambourine is big as an umbrella, and the drum has swollen to the dimensions of an Indian wigwam or an Irishman's cabin; where brazen tubes bristle with keys enough for the fingers of Briareus, and some of them gape with an orifice wide enough to invite the performer, when he is tired out with his solo, to go to bed and tuck himself in. Here is music for marriage morn or evening serenade, songs for the sentimental, catches for the merry, dirges for the sad, and chants and anthems for the pious; and here, scattered among the piles of brass and of bellum, of crystal, of silver, and of ivory, are the heads of the most notable *chefs* of the melodious art—Germans, French, Poles, Italians, Hungarians, and Spaniards—all professors of tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee, done in lithograph, zincograph, photograph, and polygraph—and each and all of them looking out upon you in the identical 'make-up' with which they present themselves bodily at Hanover Square, at the Crystal Palace, or at St James's Hall. There is Signor Buondragone, who thrills our very marrow with the double-bass; Herr Pfiffer, who mounts to the seventh heaven, and soars beyond the lark, on a pipe no bigger than your forefinger; Don Yriarte Castellano, who boleores it so enchantingly on the guitar; the great Schlippenbach, the last unrivalled violinist; Mr Cincinnatus Choppa, the renowned American Brother Bones, who was despatched from the new world to electrify the old one by his transcendent agitation of the castanets; and there is the redoubtable Polowaki, the organaphonist, who plays all manner of instruments so ravishingly without condescending to touch any instrument at all, and simply by ejecting the peculiar tones of each from his own accomplished and independent throttle.

Over the way is a museum of a different kind—the well-known mourning museum of Messrs Magpie, a sombre establishment, exhibiting a subdued aspect, and looking like a kind of half-way house between the opera-box and the churchyard. The walls are gray, deepened here and there with effective touches of black, indicative of the wares within, which are all selected and arranged for the use and delectation of bereaved (feminine) humanity. Here grief finds, for a consideration, its due symbolical insignia, and its consolation too, in all varieties of sympathizing hues, from faint lavender and neutral tints, down to unmitigated, heart-broken craze.

Talking of tints, here we are at the door of Bitumen's picture-gallery, where the old masters have latterly fallen to a terrible discount, and you may get a whole school of them for anything in reason; though the seller will not warrant them any longer, so that you must speculate on your own responsibility. The old school is, in fact, overdone, and, in the language of the dealers, that cock will hardly fight again. So now it is the new school that affords the only scope for their discriminative talent. Do you want a genuine Nasmyth? (painted by young Copal in Newman Street last year). Here it is: 'A choice subject, sir. Observe the brilliancy of the colour, the crisp sharpness of the touch—see how those light summer clouds seem to sail up out of the horizon—and then, the water, sir; look at that water—transparency itself—only a single figure, you see, generally the case in Nasmyth's cabinet pictures, and touched in with admirable freedom!' Thus old Bitumen; but it will not do this time. That 'genuine bit of Calcott' won't do either, nor that speculative article supposed to be a Turner—but not warranted—only ten pounds.

Regent Street was once much richer in masters, old and new, than it is at this moment. So far as art is

concerned, the photographers would seem to have driven the dealers nearly out of the field, and to have taken almost entire possession of it. They have erected their redoubts at every point of vantage, and play off their artillery from all points of the compass, 'up-stairs and down-stairs and in my lady's chamber'; upon every practicable door-post and lintel you see their names, their tariffs, their puffs, and their specimens—nay, their addresses are tessellated in minute-coloured tiles upon the pavement beneath your feet—and unless you walk the street blindfold, you shall not escape their appeals. They twine round pillars, they stare out of balconies and first-floor windows, and even far aloft among the chimney-tops, their advertisements challenge attention. What is curious is, that amidst all this grand array of the very elite of photographers, you see next to nothing of photography. Examine a thousand heads, and you shall hardly see ten in which the picture painted by the sun is not completely overlaid and buried by the subsequent manipulations of the artist. Nay, hundreds of them are mere tracings from the sun-pictures, which have been used only to secure an outline, the whole of the details having been afterwards filled in with oil or water colours. The key to this apparent riddle is found in the fact, that the sun will not flatter, and that nothing short of flattery will find a market in this fashionable locality.

But we will leave the crowd of dumb faces that look out upon us from wall and window, and glance at some of the living originals who perambulate the pavement. Here comes a jolly-faced, well-to-do pater-familias, with his wife on one arm, and a daughter on the other. They have just alighted from a cab, and are evidently out for a shopping holiday, having probably migrated thus far from some eastward home. Papa is in no mood to be close-fisted to-day; young miss is going to be married, and to-day's shopping may be in preparation for the event: and thereupon, they vanish into Messrs Goose and Goldenegg. A similar trio, but of a humbler class, and, as you may see by their costume, just arrived from the country, are wandering leisurely from shop-window to shop-window, and feasting with unsuppressed delight upon the never-ending series of novelties presented to view. It would amuse you to hear the remarks of the good man, and to note the profound astonishment, only displayed by their involuntary gestures, of his simple companions. Behind them comes tripping on, with a mincing sort of sedateness, Madame Gopher, the *modiste* of Southton-super-mare, who is up in London on her way to Paris for the spring fashions, and who always, on these professional journeys, takes a preliminary survey of the doings and tastes of the West End, as a guide to her own selection of foreign fashions. She is observant and critical of her London models, and takes stock of all the noted houses within and without, not scrupling to enter, and overhaul and investigate, though without the remotest intention of purchasing. In complete contrast to this business-brooding dame is that superb specimen of the modern man about town, with all-round collar, parted hair, curled moustache, whiskers, and aromatic beard, gloves of light-buff kid, and amber-headed cane, and who is garbed throughout in the latest style of Belgravian costume. You cannot say that he makes his way to the Cigar Divan—he rather drifts into it accidentally, like some imponderable trifle carried off out of sight by a current of air. Who is this that sweeps rather than walks the broad pavement? and what is she bearing with such pompous carelessness in her outstretched arms? It is a young French matron, superbly dressed à la Eugenie, with a mere *soupon* of bonnet—her hair drawn back and away from the pearly temples, and who wears something very like a train sweeping the ground. The burden she bears so proudly is her own boy-babe of three months, to

whom she is imparting the benefit of the air and the sunshine. A few yards behind her walks the *bonne*, who will ere long relieve her of her precious charge, and then walk on before. Ha! here comes Herr Dunkelkopf, the opecleidist, broad, big, burly, and merry, with a pair of fat eyes blinking mechanically to all sides of him. You know him directly, for you have seen his portrait already in all the music-shops and in half the photographers' show-boards. Dunkelkopf goes in for popularity, and that is why he has had himself lithographed, engraved, and photographed so liberally, and on that account also he makes a point of parading himself in full fig on this world-renowned Corso for three hours a day at least. He is rarely alone, or at any great distance from a batch of his companions and peers of the platform or orchestra; and, lo! a whole band of them at his heels, bearded in outrageous fashion, swathed in cloth of continental cut, and peg-topped like so many Zouaves: they are not going anywhere or doing anything particular this morning, but, kept together by a kind of mutual attraction, oscillate this way and that, laughing, jesting, and smoking, and evidently not a little flattered by the gaze of the passers-by. Yonder goes one who would draw more eyes upon him if he could be seen in his true colours; you might almost suppose him a cabinet minister, or an M.P. at the very least, so consequential and independent is his bearing; you would never imagine that pretentious figure condescending to anything mean, much less to anything villainous—yet so it is: that seeming aristarch is nothing but a swell-mobsman, and, dignified as he looks, is at this moment under the vigilant eye of a detective, who dogs him at a distance—a fact which the accomplished gentleman knows well enough, and is therefore beating a retreat from the scene of many a profitable exploit, with the conviction that on that arena at least the game is up for the day. Clustered round a shop-window, in which the celebrated inventor of the patent idrotobolic upper-leathers has exhibited his life-sized portrait, are a group of young French of both sexes, who, struck with the idea of something grotesque in the exhibition, cannot restrain their laughter, and are indulging it rather freely. It is too bad of the waggish young fellow who is their guide and interpreter, to garble the inscription on the portrait, and to assert that it is to be transferred to the National Gallery on the demise of the original.

A picture of life in any part of London would not be complete without the presence of children; and abounding as they do on this sunny afternoon in Regent Street, they really form the most charming element in the scene. They are the children to whom childhood is a reality and a blissful inheritance, and who, nurtured in the lap of ease and plenty, enjoy its unmixed pleasures without a thought of future pain. To them the lordly street and its regal shops are an inexhaustible store of delights; and as they ramble up and down in the charge of parents or friends, their pleased and innocent prattle contrasts musically with the chaotic roar and rumble of wheels—like the notes of the song-birds heard 'mid the surging of the wind-shaken forest.

You haggard and wan-faced woman creeping along in a patched cotton-gown, which from its wretched fit has the appearance of being borrowed, is the only figure we have yet encountered which seems quite out of keeping with the gay surroundings in which she moves. In her pale face there is no sign of sympathy with aught that is going on under her eye. Her thoughts are far away—in that lone and cheerless garret over the water, where it is her lot to stitch, stitch, stitch from year to year, for the means of prolonging a starving existence—and where she has left her sick child unattended, to whom she is longing to return. She is taking home a bundle of shirts, at which she has been toiling early and late for this

week past at the rate of about fourpence a day, and is wondering whether she may have to wait hours even for that unprincipled wage, or will have the good-fortune to find the manager disengaged, and so get dismissed at once. The poor shirt-maker has hardly passed on, when, from a blazoned chariot forth steps a queenly dame, scented the air with fragrance, and dazzling the eye with the lustre of gems and purple—while around her bare heads and snowy cravats are bending and bowing and wooing the earth, as if overpowered with the atmosphere of her presence. Perchance, if we were gifted to see anything more real than the mere phenomena that surround us in our earthly life, we might catch a glimpse just now of that equal-footed messenger invisibly stalking hitherwards, who—pass but a few more shadowy hours—shall lay the needy shirt-maker and the august object of so much interested admiration on the same dusty level, and banish at once and for ever all earthly distinctions between them.

Do you think it strange that such a sepulchral thought should come across us in the midst of a *Vanity Fair* like this? How can it be otherwise when Regent Street has provided its own *memento mori*, and exhibits it obtrusively to all comers. Come—turn your eyes hither, and let us close our casual survey by a glance at the fashionable monument shop. Here are grand architectural tombs, gaping sarcophagi, pensively designed mementoes in the shape of broken shafts and columns, wreathed urns, weeping virgins, and virtues personified in marble. And, lo! among these figurative emblems and sculptured forms of ideal humanity, there is a living memento also—an active, vivacious *Young Mortality*, enthusiastically busy at his craft, and artistically chipping away at a mural tablet in memory of the youthful Lord Postobit, who—you may read the monumental inscription for yourself—departed this life only last month, 'aged twenty-five.' See how dexterously the elegantly dressed operator wields hammer and chisel in honour of his departed lordship: note how the brilliant glitters on his plump white finger as he raises the hammer and taps it crepitatingly on the shining tool. With what an air, and with what motions of studied grace, he administers the sharp blows in rapid succession! You think of the light-fingered pianist dropping gaily on the keys, and you say to yourself: 'Here also is an accomplished professor dedicating his genius to the world of fashion. Do they delight to listen to his music?'

THE FIRST PICTURE.

'STILL that light from his window, mother, and twelve o'clock has struck!'

'We can do nothing, Helen. You would not stop at this hour? It is too late to go in.'

'But we might ring the upstairs bell gently. Mary would come down and speak to us. Do, dear mother. I shall not be able to sleep if I go home without hearing something of him.'

The two speakers crossed the street, and rang the bell of the house from which the bright light of a lamp shone out of the high-shaped window of an artist's studio. They had scarcely a minute to wait, before a young lady opened the door, and held out both hands to receive the affectionate pressure of theirs. She smiled, as if pleased to see them; but her face was pale and anxious.

'Why is James at work so late again?' asked the younger visitor. He will ruin his health utterly, and his picture is so nearly finished, and so beautiful, that it cannot be necessary.'

'I cannot understand it, Helen. He has been painting the whole day, scarcely allowing himself time to eat his dinner.'

'Oh, do go up to him! Tell him I entreat him to leave off to-night—for my sake.'

'I am really afraid to interrupt him; he is excited and irritable. He was quite vexed with me an hour ago, when I took him some coffee.' Her eyes filled with tears.

'You are overtired yourself, and your hand shakes,' said Helen's mother. 'You have been copying those manuscripts all this time, I fear. You all work too hard—much too hard. Here has my Helen been giving music-lessons for six hours to-day, and then up till this time in Exeter Hall.'

'We must work, dear mother; you know we must; but I am quite able—quite well and strong. Try once more, Mary. Go in gently, and give my message, if you can, and tell him that I got two new pupils to-day, and that the *Messiah* was grand to-night; but I missed your faces so in the old corner! Why did you not come?'

'Oh, he would not hear of it.'

'Tell him I had none of that delicious feeling that he laughs at me for having, as if, when the sound swells out, I did it all myself. Do go and try to make him laugh.'

Mary shook her head, as if she knew that was impossible, but said she would go up to him.

'If you succeed in taming his ferocity, hold up this white camelia in the window, and then give it to him. You *will* walk up and down on the opposite pavement for five minutes, mother?'

Her mother consented, but rather reluctantly, and Mary went slowly up stairs, and opened the studio door very gently. As she looked in, she saw that her brother was sitting in front of his easel, with his hands buried in his hair. The light of the lamp fell on masterly studies from Italian art—casts, draperies, anatomical drawings, fine sketches, finished pictures, and all the usual contents of a hard-working artist's studio, but, brightest of all, on the picture on the easel. She stood behind him now, silently staring at that picture, with the bewildered feeling that a wild, perplexed dream gives. In the morning, she had seen the canvas filled with figures full of grace, spirit, and expression; nothing seemed wanting but the last finish; now, one corner of the picture was entirely gone, and in its place was a gray neutral tint of paint. She stood there till a sense of giddiness and faintness made her cling to the back of her brother's chair. He started up, and she staggered against the wall; but without noticing it, he put out his lamp, and hurried down stairs. The glimmering light of the candle she had brought up only seemed to add to the wretched impression of everything about her, and she followed as fast as she was able. She had forgotten Helen and her anxieties, and the flower had dropped unnoticed from her hand. When she reached her sitting-room, she found her brother there, in something of the same attitude he had been in before. It was a very small room, poorly furnished, but yet had an air of refinement about it. A small table in a corner was covered with sheets of manuscript and the ink in the pen was still wet.

'James, my dear brother!' Mary began.

He held out one hand, and shook it, as if to forbid her to speak. She began to collect and put away her writing, and some tears dropped on the paper as she did so. There was a long silence.

'Can you get me a glass of water, Mary?' She was glad of the words, few as they were.

'The coffee is hot. Have coffee, dear James.'

'No, no—water!' he repeated impatiently, and drank it off to the last drop when she gave it. Again there was a silence.

'Don't speak to me, but listen,' he said presently. 'I'm not mad, though I'm a brute, and have left you down here writing and slaving till you're half-dead—I see that. Don't be anxious about money,' he went on, throwing a number of sovereigns on the table—

'don't be anxious just now. That baronet paid for his portrait this evening—at last.'

'It's not anxiety I feel, James; it is'—

'Hush!—be silent! I'm not mad, I tell you. I know what I am about.' His head was raised now, and she saw a pale face, with swollen veins on the high white forehead, and eyes red from over-use.

'I saw how it ought to be about an hour ago, after it was almost finished. It came to me suddenly, like a revelation; there was nothing for it but to take it all out. Stop! I can't bear anything—and least of all, pity! I cannot work on it again till the paint dries, so I shall go off somewhere to the country for three or four days. Keep the stove a-light, and let in air when the wind is dry, and go out and walk, and don't copy above two hours a day, and get Helen to come to you and go and see Helen—that's all you can do for me. And now, good-night. Go to bed directly. You look so ill, you make me wretched.'

'Won't you hear a message from Helen?'

'Helen! No, not to-night.'

She took up her candle, and moved sadly towards the door of her bedroom; it opened out of the other.

'I'm going to smoke a cigar, and walk up and down for five minutes; the air will do me good. I shall be off very early in the morning.'

'Let me go with you.'

'Not this time; I must be alone: good-night. I have the key of the door.'

And so they parted; but before a quarter of an hour, James was at her door, telling her not to be melancholy, for he had six weeks before him yet for his picture, and asking for Helen's message. Having heard it, he left his love for her, told Mary to sleep sound, and not get up early, and went up to his room.

Though a little comforted, poor Mary lay awake for hours, revolving sad thoughts of ruined hopes that had been built on that picture, which, notwithstanding James's words, she believed would never be finished now, and it was late before she awoke. Her first thought was of him, and she hurried on her dressing-gown, and ran up to his room; but his door was open, and he was gone. He seemed not to have entered his studio again, for when she went in to keep her promises about the stove, the camelia lay behind his chair as it had dropped from her hand. She took it up, and put it in water, avert her head from the easel, that she might not see the picture, and determine to call on Helen early in the day, and sighing to think what she would suffer when she heard the state in which it was now.

There had been a long engagement between James and Helen, dating back to the time when Helen was the daughter of a rich merchant, and James was the favourite nephew of a rich uncle, and destined for the bar. When he, following his unconquerable love of art, relinquished his profession, offended his uncle, and lost his inheritance, it was Helen alone who stood by him, had faith in his genius, and reliance on his steadiness of purpose. Then came three years' separation while he studied in Italy; and he came home to find her father bankrupt, and her beautiful voice and musical talents the support of the family; but constant to her love for him, and dearer to his heart than ever.

'You shall marry her when you have sold your first picture in the Royal Academy,' her father had said; and all the more, because her father was unfortunate, had Helen obeyed him implicitly, and waited—waited long and faithfully. The first year of his return, James could not finish anything that satisfied himself; he would not exhibit at all. But now she had confident hopes that the time was at hand. That picture must succeed; there could be no doubt about it; so she employed every leisure hour in training her younger sister to take her place in the family. Lucy already taught her pupils occasionally, and Lucy's voice was finer than her own; so she looked

forward with hope to her marriage-day. Half in joke, half in earnest, it was already fixed between her and James. They had decided it was to be on the 10th of May, just long enough after the opening of the exhibition to allow them to prepare. Well might Mary's voice tremble, then, as she told Helen the events of the night before. But Helen's faith in James was unconquerable. 'Trust to him,' she said; 'he knows what he is about. Did he not say so? He will come back and go to work again, and you will see that he is right.'

And he did come back on the third evening, full of life and heart, with a face brightened up by the keen winds of a frosty February, in which he had walked twenty miles a day; got up at dawn next morning, and worked early and late for weeks. No one saw his work, and no one talked about it; but the two loving hearts that felt with him saw that all was going on well, and had no anxiety. Many a pleasant hour they passed in the little sitting-room, when the labours of the day were over, and many a time it resounded with jokes and laughter, for James and Helen were both full of life, and Mary had a ready sympathy always for joy or sorrow. At last they all stood together before the finished picture. It was a noble work, infinitely finer than it could have been without the alteration and hard work of the last six weeks. Tears stood in Mary's eyes, and the light of joy and pride flashed from Helen's as they congratulated the artist and themselves.

Something had to be done, however. An artist never thinks his work complete; there is always some last touch to be given, and they were ordered down again. On the stairs, they were startled by a loud double knock, and saw a handsome carriage at the door as it opened. Mr Thompson was asked for, and a gentleman, whom they knew in a moment as the original of the portrait of Sir Jasper Langley, was shewn up to the studio.

He had come to see the picture, which he remembered as a sketch when his portrait was done. He looked at it long without speaking, through his glass, through his curved-up hand, with his head to one side, with his face close up to it, then far off. He hid every bit of it by turns with his fingers, and shaded first one corner, then the other, with his handkerchief. The artist stood by fuming inwardly, his stock of patience failing fast.

'How much do you ask for this picture, Mr Thompson?' was the first question. No word of praise or admiration had preceded it.

'A hundred guineas, Sir Jasper.'

'Very much too high a price for your first exhibition.'

'Very much too low for a year's work, Sir Jasper.'

'I repeat that it is too high a price,' said the baronet, again looking through his glass.

'And I repeat that I will not abate a single farthing,' said the artist, almost fiercely.

There was no arguing with such a tone as that. 'Well, I suppose I must have the picture,' said Sir Jasper. 'Mark it "Sold" when you send it in.'

'I will do so, Sir Jasper.'

The baronet put his hand in his pocket, and was going to ask for pen and ink to write a cheque, but paused on looking round at the bare walls, the carpetless floor, the utter want of all furniture except the gems of art that shed a glory on it. He saw that he had to do with a needy man. He might get the picture cheaper by waiting till the Academy opened. There was the chance of rejection. He looked again. No, that was impossible. But there was the chance of a bad place—a bad light—the neglect of the public towards an unknown name; and it was very unlikely that any one else would find it out, at all events, at the private view, or the first day. He rescinded his desire that it should be marked 'Sold,' but promised to complete the purchase on the first Monday in May,

and took leave. James then saw him down stairs, and returned his bow from the window of his handsome carriage as it drove away.

Why did Sir Jasper try to beat down the price of that picture? He was not a very good judge, still he believed that it was well worth twice as much as he was asked to pay, and it was quite as easy to him to pay one sum as the other. It was simply because he loved making bargains, and was used to it; because he was what is called a patron of rising talent. But why, then, having so mean a soul, did he covet that picture? Because he valued all pictures, not for their intrinsic beauty, or any pleasure he derived from them, but for their money-value. It was his ambition to be able to say that he sold a work of art for three times the price he gave for it.

Quite free from any speculations of this kind, James bounded up stairs three steps at a time; told his news; said that needle-work and manuscripts must vanish into darkness; notes of excuse must be written to pupils; notes of explanation to Lucy and mamma, and instant preparation made to spend the rest of the day somewhere among green fields and woods. It was lovely weather towards the end of March. No time was lost, and they were off in high spirits in half an hour.

It was a bright and joyous day. They came home by moonlight, loaded with primroses, sweet-brier, harebells, and ivy wreaths, having wandered over wild commons and through green lanes; dined at a country inn, and decided that the wedding-trip should be into that same country. Then they had supper in the little sitting-room, brightened and scented with their flowers and wreaths; sang glee, laughed, and talked till one in the morning; and at last only separated because Mary had begun a sage lecture on the fact that that old lady in the velvet dress was to take her first sitting at ten o'clock.

The old lady's portrait, and other work of that kind, which must be done for the money's sake, occupied the time that James longed to give to new pictures that crowded upon his imagination in the first flush of his enthusiasm. That cheque, if it had come out of the pocket, would have produced a rich interest—interest of more value to the world, if only the world knew it, than cent per cent; but it takes no note of its losses in that way.

He sent his picture to the Royal Academy for exhibition. Then came the anxiety as to whether it would be received; but this ended in about ten days. His picture was hung. How and where? That was the next thought. And so, amidst drudgery and anxiety, came on the day of the private view, to which artists do not go, and then the day that the exhibition opened to the public. James had kept entirely aloof from all his brother-artists; he would not make any acquaintances among them till he had tried his strength, or he would have heard something of his fate; as it was, he was as ignorant of it as any casual visitor to the exhibition on the first Monday in May.

Before twelve o'clock, Mary and Helen stood at the closed door of the Royal Academy among the crowd assembled there, something like the crowd at the pit-doors of a theatre. The hour struck on St Martin's Church, the door opened, the crowd pressed in, the shilling ready in each hand was paid, the ticket received, and they hurried upstairs. The rooms looked empty, though outside it had seemed that there were people enough to half-fill them; they could see the walls of every one. The picture they looked for was not in the first, nor in the middle room. They were both growing giddy by the time they reached the great room, and Mary's heart sank, and began to tell her that what they sought must be looked for in the octagon room—then the condemned cell of exhibitors—or among the architectural drawings. No such dreary ideas ever entered Helen's more hopeful mind. She saw everything even more quickly and

clearly than usual, her senses being rendered more intense by her excitement. Suddenly she pressed Mary's hand, and hurried her across to the opposite wall. There it was, in the great room, below the line, but in a good light. It was beyond, far beyond Mary's hope, but not up to Helen's; still, she also flushed up with gladness, for even she could not but see that such a place was a high honour to a young unknown artist.

The first thought, as they steadied themselves before it, and were able to think at all, was, how small it looks! the next, how beautiful it looks! They stood there long, and when they turned round, they found that the room was filling very fast, and that it had already become difficult to get near any of the favourite pictures, even if they had cared to do it; so they made their way back to the top of the stairs, to watch for James. A continued stream of people passed up, of whom many were young artists. All the members of the Academy knew all about it long ago; had been at the dinner, or the private view; but the young men and the great majority of the lady-exhibitors came now for the first time.

There was James at last. He came up slowly, pushed his hair nervously off his forehead, as if his head ached, and shewed that very pale countenance that overfatigue and anxiety always gave him. Eagerly they met him, and he had to remind them once or twice to speak low, as they told their news and hurried him in. By this time, the crowd was so great that all the low-hung pictures were hidden, except to eyes which were close to them, so that the effect of his was not so good as it had been. But James was quite satisfied with his place. Not with his picture. What true artist ever was satisfied with his work? One look was enough; and then he helped his two companions through the crowd to the upper end among the master-pieces, enjoying and pointing out the good, and passing unnoticed those for which he had no sympathy. His spirits rose as he looked. His own work was imperfect; no one knew its imperfection as well as he did; but it bore within it the promise that, some day, and that at no very distant date, he should be placed among these.

'One more look at yours before we go,' said Mary.

They pressed through the crowd, James turning aside to other pictures, while she took her last look at his.

A group of fashionable ladies, with one or two gentlemen, had stopped before it, while Mary stooped down examining it closely.

'O yes! this is J. Thompson's,' said one. 'The lady is actually standing near the sea!'

'So she is!' said another, and they all laughed.

'And there are the excited figures on the right!' said one of the gentlemen in a mocking tone, and again they all laughed.

What could they mean by their impertinent laughter? Mary did not hear it; but it was a pity they did not see the indignant flash of Helen's eyes that followed them as they passed on. She forgot them and their trifling, however, in a moment when James again came to her side.

They walked away homewards together. 'Are you ready, both of you, to set off for the sea to-morrow?'

'But Sir Jasper?' said Mary.

'Don't wait for him!' cried Helen. 'James is quite ill. Look at his forehead; he must have rest and change. Sir Jasper's letter can be sent after us.'

'You remember your promise, Helen; one week after this date we are married.'

She pressed the arm on which her hand rested. They had forgotten all the world as their eyes met.

'Thompson! is it possible? Where have you been these hundred years?' It was an old school-fellow and college-companion who held out both hands and stopped them with these words, as they walked along the Strand.

'Harris! my dear fellow, how glad I am to see you again! I should have passed you if you had not stopped me.' They shook hands warmly.

'Miss Thompson!—I must not say "Mary" now, I fear—have you forgotten me?'

There was a faint blush on Mary's cheek, which she tried to laugh off, as she held out her hand. It told of memories that suddenly flashed upon her of the old, old story—a youthful passion in former days between her and her brother's friend.

'Seven years since we parted, I do believe,' said Harris. 'I suppose you have passed at the bar long ago, Thompson?'

'You must come and see me, and then I will tell you all about it. And what have you been about all this time?'

'I? Oh, sometimes in London, sometimes in Paris, making money slowly, and spending it quickly.'

'Ah! I have seen your name in literature, and enjoyed some of your speculations.'

'I generally write anonymously though. No, don't give me your card, and rush off again. Come and dine with me. My rooms are close by; and I've a pleasant set of fellows coming, mostly of the same profession as myself.'

'Not to-day. I am engaged.'

'Very pleasantly, I see. Lovely girl. Won't you introduce me?' This was said aside.

The introduction was made; and by promises that the party should break up quite early, and declarations that as he himself must be off to Paris next morning, they could not meet again for months, Harris persuaded Helen and Mary to take his side of the question.

Harris's rooms were handsome; his dinner, wine, and guests all good and pleasant. Jokes and puns flew round. The exhibition that had just opened came under discussion after dinner. Then began various remarks, and considerable abuse of certain pictures, that provoked James. He exchanged a good deal of excellent criticism with one of the company who sat at the bottom of the table, and who seemed the only one able to appreciate art at all. As to the others, they were perfectly reckless of anything, except finding food for wit and fun; so, after flatly contradicting some, and laughing at others, he had made up his mind not to say another word on the subject, for fear he should lose his temper, when Harris took a copy of the *Midas* out of his pocket, and began to read the article on the private view of the Royal Academy, for the amusement of the company.

Of course it began with eulogiums on the works of long honoured academicians and associates; but when younger men and unknown names were brought under review, James's ire rose again.

'A most ignorant piece of criticism!' he exclaimed. 'Wrong on every point. It praises exactly what is bad, and pulls to pieces everything that is good.'

'Infinitely obliged!' said Harris with a bow.

'Obliged! Why, what is it to you?'

'Only that it's my own writing. You did not know I was an art-critic.'

'No, indeed; such an idea never could have entered my head.'

'This is capital fun,' laughed he who sat at Harris's right hand. 'Go on, Harris. I suppose there's more.'

'O yes, some of my best hits are to come. "No. 777. *By the Sea*, by J. Thompson." Hope he's no relation of yours, Thompson.'

'If he is, I shall not recognise him in your description, I fancy.'

'Well, here he is in style.—"We really have given as much time, in fact much more time, to this very exalted effort than it deserves, or than our already overtaxed patience rendered easy, but confess that we were unable to arrive at the very deep meaning which

this young aspirant evidently thinks is expressed by the hollow eyes and excited gestures which he has here portrayed. As for the young lady in the centre, we think that the healthful breezes from the sea, near which she stands, might have been expected to give her a less cadaverous hue; and what, in the name of common sense, are the figures on her right aiming at? For Heaven's sake, let us away with these pretentious flights, at least till the fledglings have got their pen-feathers. The ideal!—it is a word of which we are sick. We are really tempted sometimes to utter profanities against the great names of antiquity, and quote Sir Joshua, when similarly provoked:

When they talked of their Raphaels, Correggios, and stuff,

He shifted his trumpet, and only took snuff.

A tea-cup, carefully painted, is worth all this rubbish twenty times over. Still, there is some talent in this young man. If he can consent to begin at the very beginning, to deprive us for some years of the pleasure of contemplating his handiworks, to say to himself daily, in the words of the great master already quoted, "Draw! draw! draw!" to study chiaroscuro, in which, as in neat handling, he is eminently deficient; to go, in short, to study art at its fountain-head in the Eternal City, then we may be able to welcome him among us some day; as it is, we heartily advise him to think again whether he has not mistaken his vocation, for haste and carelessness give but poor earnest of future excellence."

Not a muscle of James's face moved.

"Capital!" said Harris's right-hand man. "Poor J. Thompson! let's drink his health, and a pleasant journey to Rome."

The toast went round.

"You don't drink the toast, Clive," said Harris to him who sat at the bottom of the table.

"I do not," replied Clive, pushing away his glass indignantly. "I hate this system of reckless criticism. I believe it weighs like an incubus on our schools. What do you know about art, Harris? You've made a hundred blunders in the course of your article."

"What! do you admire this *opus Thompsonianum*, then?" asked one.

"I know nothing about it. I have not been at the exhibition this morning long enough to see above half-a-dozen pictures, but I object to the whole system. It's a disgrace to the age. Critics, if allowed at all, ought to be trained to their work, pass an examination."

"Take out a licence, perhaps, wear a badge—'Licensed to cut up young artists!'"

"They ought to be educated for their work at least. Very likely the picture they treat in this flippancy has cost time and labour, such as they are incapable even of understanding."

"A splendid burst of eloquence, Clive! He'll have you down in his next novel, Harris!"

"I repeat, it's a disgrace to the age." Clive went on. "And the provoking thing is, that the public is led by these absurd dogmas like a flock of sheep. "I see by the *Midas* that such a picture is excessively bad!" says one; "and that such a picture is full of affection," says another; when all the time the *Midas* has nothing to do with it, but only some individual who sets up as critic, without knowing more of art than a baby. *We, indeed!*"

It might have been thought that James would sympathise with Clive, and second his indignant appeal; but the fact was, he had not heard a word of this hurried dialogue. His inward rage so possessed him, that the room and the men in it seemed to whirl before his eyes, and their voices to sound only as a distant murmur. The insults heaped on his work were the more stinging because they came from his early friend, to whom his heart had just opened so

warmly; and, moreover, he was at this moment less able than usual to bear any kind of provocation. Every faculty of his being was therefore engaged in preserving an outward calm, and he succeeded so perfectly, that no one had the slightest suspicion that he was feeling anything at all.

The reading that had been interrupted was not resumed, and the party broke up soon afterwards. "I am to walk home with you, Thompson, you know; stop a moment," cried Harris.

James did not answer. He was already on the stairs; but Harris, busy in dismissing his company, observed nothing, and they were soon in the street. Harris could scarcely keep up with the pace at which his companion strode along, and as to conversation, it was impossible, so after a gasp or two, he gave it up.

They found Helen and Mary in the little sitting-room, which was decorated with flowers, and had a sort of gala air. A letter in Sir Jasper's hand lay on the table. Helen's eyes beamed as she gave it to James, and it seemed to her that she heard their marriage-bells ringing, for there was the price of his "first exhibition picture." But no answering look met hers. His eyes were fixed on Harris with a look of scorn, his face deadly pale, and his lips firmly closed. He opened the letter, looked at it, and crushed it in his hand. An ominous silence and a strange confused dread fell over them.

Harris tried to rally, and turned aside to look at two small cabinet pictures.

"Pretty things these," he said. "Specimens of modern Italian art, I suppose, picked up when you visited Rome, as I heard you mention this evening. Strange how Italy has degenerated since its great days!"

"Only a Rubens and a Vandyck. They belong to a baronet, for whom I chose them in Antwerp. Admirable art-critic!"

Mary was shocked. She had never seen her brother rude before.

"Come up to my room, will you?" said James, and there was something so imperious in his tone, that Harris mechanically obeyed. Helen followed, beckoning to Mary to accompany her, which she did.

As they reached the open door of the studio, they saw Harris, who had just entered it, turn ghastly pale, and visibly tremble. His first glance had told him that his old friend was an artist, of which he had no idea; his first thought had reminded him of his criticism. He tried to speak, to excuse himself, to declare what he had written was in ignorance; but his voice died away in indistinct mutterings.

"No more words," said James in a suppressed voice, but speaking distinctly. "Here is a letter for you to read—to read aloud."

Harris took the letter and read it, but not aloud. It dropped from his hand on the floor, and Helen snatched it up and read:

"Sir Jasper Langley feels confident that after the opinion of the press, as expressed in the article in the *Midas*, Mr Thompson will not expect him to complete the contemplated arrangement for his picture. Sir Jasper Langley much regrets this *contre-temps*, and hopes on some future occasion to be more fortunate in a selection of some work of Mr Thompson's."

Helen tried, as she finished, to catch James's hand, to speak to him, to make him hear her, but in vain. He passed her, and went close up to Harris, as if to strike him, but by a violent effort mastered the impulse.

"Vain, ignorant, presumptuous fool!" he said in a voice almost choked by the burning passion he held down. "The picture you have ruined was the hard and earnest work of a whole year—the result of the study and thought of four years. Leave my house! Take yourself out of my sight, or I shall forget my own dignity, and lose all command of myself!"

Harris bowed his head, and held out his hands, in

a deprecating manner, but did not move; and James seeing him still there, rushed down stairs and out of the house, as if he had no other means of controlling his own violence.

'I have learned my lesson,' said Harris, looking at Helen, who stood upright before him. 'Never—never while I live shall I forget it. If he had stabbed me, I deserved it.'

No one answered. Mary had nearly fainted. Helen stood immovable and silent.

'Can you forgive me?' said Harris. 'Miss Thompson! Mary! you know I did not mean this.'

Helen only moved her hand in the direction of the door, as if to ask him to leave them; Mary hid her face in her hands.

'Only hear me before I go. Tell him I meant no harm to him; that I had no idea he was an artist, not the remotest idea he painted that picture. I was obliged to give some lightness to my article, and by evil fortune I fixed on his to abuse.'

Helen started, and turned away in disgust.

'Hear me yet! I see my wretched error—my crime. Tell him I will never write another criticism; that I would right him now at any cost or humiliation to myself; but it is too late!' and so saying, he went slowly away.

It was long before they moved. It had grown quite dark when they went down to the sitting-room. They lighted a solitary candle, and it shewed them the flowers they had arranged so gaily for James. They went into the bedroom, and there were the travelling-bags packed ready for the morning. Where were their hopes now? The marriage-bells had become a death-knell. They sat quite still, holding each other by the hand, and listening anxiously for James's return. There was a knock at the door. They both started up, and ran down stairs, longing to give sympathy and comfort.

What a blank, dreary feeling it was when the door opened to see, not James, but a boy with a note from him. Helen seized it, and ran to the lamp on the stairs to read it, while Mary tried in vain with her shaking hand to find her purse, and pay the boy, who asked for a shilling, for his message. At last she had done, the door was shut, and she was able to hear the few words, written in pencil:

'Forgive me for leaving you; but I cannot trust myself within reach of that insolent upstart—hardly could bear even you near me. The train is starting, and I am going off towards the north. I will write from wherever I stop. I must accustom myself to loneliness.'

They went up slowly together. Mary sank into a chair; Helen stood in the middle of the room with a face of anguish. She tried to speak, but heavy moans came from her aching heart, and Mary was roused from her own sorrow to go and clasp her closely, try to comfort her, try to tell her he would return, that they should be happy still, that patience was all they wanted.

'Mary, Mary!' the voice came at last choked with sobs, 'you say words only, idle words. His is not a nature to bear shocks like these; he is too nervous, too excitable; and he was ill before—quite overwrought! He ought to have had rest ever since he sent in that grand work, that used up his very life to finish, and that has been so foully used.' Her voice failed, and her indignation seemed to shake her whole frame.

'If I am in life,' she went on presently, 'I will go to him the moment we know where he is; and you too, Mary; we will both go. No wonder you are able to bear this better than I; you who have been his comforter, his help throughout all his trials, while I— This shall not go on! I must make my father see it. Yes, my dear father will see it. I must have a wife's right to be his soother and helper—to share his joys, and sorrows, and lighten them as

only a true wife can. What matters selling pictures? I can work. Thank Heaven, I can work too. We can all work. This shall not go on!'

Mary only answered with a fervent embrace. To go to James was all she longed for; but three days passed without a word from him. These days would have been insupportable but for the amount that had to be done in them. Mary had to prepare everything for an indefinite absence from home; Helen to prepare Lucy, her mother, and father, to part with her from home for ever. With the first two, her task was easy, except for the sorrow that will cling round that trying separation; but with her father, it was a hard struggle; he did, however, give a reluctant consent at last. She spent her nights with Mary always. It was at night that the heavy trial had to be borne: then came miserable fears, dreadful images before her, and she could not sleep. Often she was aware that Mary, too, was awake and crying bitterly. 'Mary is too gentle, too sensitive for her stormy life,' would Helen say to herself; 'she needs a sister's love and sympathy. Oh, only let us find him; then all shall be right!'

The postman's knock was always startling, and hitherto always disappointing. Two letters came for James on the fourth morning; none from him yet. Mary was authorised to open all that came for him, and when the bitter disappointment had been so far recovered as to let her think of anything, she opened these. Her exclamation over the first brought Helen to her side. Sir Jasper Langley had written to commission another picture—Mr Thompson to fix on his subject and name his price. The second letter explained the meaning of the first—it was from the Royal Academy: his picture there was sold to another purchaser.

Joy and exultation took possession of them at first; but then came unbearable impatience to take this news to James. Helen could not sit still; she roamed through the two rooms revolving impracticable schemes of setting off in search of him, and always ending with the conviction that she must wait. Several cards were left for him in the course of the morning—one had 'Mr Clive' on it; the others had names of well-known artists.

At last came the letter so longed for; the direction had been so illegible that it had been misread. It realised some of their worst fears. It was evident James was ill—very ill; that his mind was confused and wandering. Many of the words could not be read; but the date was there—they knew where to find him—Brodick, in the island of Arran.

Neither spoke. There was not a moment to lose, for evening was drawing on, and there was but one thought and one wish in either heart. They succeeded in getting away; and before the moon rose that night, they had left London fifty miles behind.

They were in Glasgow early in the morning, and on the Clyde early next day. Now there was time to breathe, time to think. The beautiful scenery around them, they saw nothing of. Helen shut her eyes, that she might not see it, so miserable was the contrast with her inward struggle. There was something so strange, wild, and unlike himself in James's letter; no word of affection, no wish for them. He spoke of spending a whole day and night on the mountains; of his loathing at his own weakness, because, hating the very idea of ever painting again, he was always seeing pictures everywhere—in the gloomy glens, on the granite peaks, among the clouds, and over the sea. Then followed an unintelligible description of wild and fantastic forms that pursued him wherever he went, and to avoid which, he was going out in a boat.

'He is very ill; perhaps in danger. O that we were with him! We shall restore him with our love and our news, if we are in time—yes, if we are in time!' she would inwardly exclaim, and starting up

to see what progress they were making, would see Mary's eyes fixed on her, full of anxious love.

By seven in the evening, they were nearing the wild peaks of Arran. It was a lovely night when they swept into the beautiful bay of Brodick—a more beautiful is nowhere to be found on the coasts of Britain. The sun, getting low, was lighting up the lofty peak of Goatfell, and innumerable other peaks and craggy heights caught the glow. The woods of the lordly castle lay in deep gloom down to the water's edge. Helen and Mary stood side by side ready to land.

'Helen, it is the tenth of May—it is the day of your marriage. It is a good omen.'

Helen's face became deadly pale. They were very near the little wooden pier, and were straining their eyes to try to catch a glimpse of the one form in all the world they longed to see; but among the few people who had collected in that quiet place to see the steamer land its passengers, he was not to be seen. They stepped ashore the moment it stopped; only one other passenger landed, who took his way up the steep road directly.

They looked round for guidance, for they had no direction, and applied to a man who seemed to be pier-keeper, to know if he could direct them to any lodging where a young English gentleman might be. He examined their faces inquiringly, and with a kind expression on his face.

'Ye'll be frae Glasgy, this morning?' was his characteristic reply.

'Yes, O yes; and we are urgently anxious—very anxious to lose no time,' said Helen.

'And ye can frae Lunnon?'

'Yes. You know where he is. Take us there!' She had a trembling dread of asking a question, and began to walk hurriedly up the road. Mary shook so terribly that the kind-looking man made her take his arm, and followed, and soon overtook Helen.

'He is ill?' she said soon, in a hoarse suppressed voice.

'Ou ay, ou ay! puir lad! he is that. It's the brain-fever, they say. Ye'll maybe be feared to gang in?'

'Feared!' Helen said no more, and her tone made the guide walk faster and faster.

'He's had a guid doctor and a kind nurse,' he said.

'Mrs Andrew Hamilton—we're a' Hamiltons here, ye see—she's been aye beside him. He's cried aye upon twa names; I'm thinkin' it's just yoursels. But he was very quiet when I cam doon to the pier. I stopped to hear news o' him.'

Should they never reach the lodgings? They pressed on faster and faster. At last they turned aside by a jutting rock under some trees, and stopped at a cottage. A young man dressed in black came to the door instantly with a gesture that was meant to prevent their entrance, but at a word from the guide, he made way for them. The door opened at once into the room.

Was that James they saw, with ghastly pale face, eyes unnaturally large and dilated, tight compressed lips, and rigid arms that lay outside the bed? Mary had flung herself on her knees beside him, and pressed her warm hand on his heart, to feel if it beat. Helen, with face as white as his, fixed her eyes on his, then laid her cheek to his. 'James, my own love!' she whispered in his ear. 'Mary is here; Helen is here; Helen your wife—your own! Look at her!' and then again she raised her head, and tried to fix his wild distracted eyes.

'It beats!' It was Mary that spoke.

'Air! air!' gasped Helen, making an earnest gesture with her hand.

Some one opened the window, and a bright ray of the setting sun, and a sweet scent of the evening air, fell upon them all three. The lids began to close a little over the eyes; the white rings seen all round the iris before, were no longer visible; a ray of

consciousness came into the eyes; they brightened, they looked into Helen's. The lines of pain and distraction began to smooth away; the parched lips unclosed. Some kind hand placed in Helen's a glass containing the strong stimulant that the medical man had left for him; she moistened the lips with it, then tried, and succeeded in getting some into the mouth.

'James, it is our marriage-day.'

The eyes gently closed, the lips visibly smiled, the breathing became soft and regular. He was asleep. They had sunk on their knees beside the bed. The minister—for he it was who was present—laid a hand on each head, and said softly: 'Send up praise to Him who has given the blessing!' Then there was a hushed silence for hours.

When morning broke, James still slept, and Helen still watched. Her soul was absorbed in him. She watched that there might be no sound to disturb, that warmth and air might be about him, that she might be ready to give support when he awoke. Mary, utterly exhausted, lay on the floor, wrapped in a cloak, with her head on a pillow, and slept too. It was not till more than twelve hours had so passed that he awoke, so weak, he could scarcely move his hand, but restored to consciousness and affection, and able to understand his happiness.

Need we describe the joy and peace of that recovery to life and health; or the marriage-day that followed; or the weeks of happiness passed in that wild and beautiful island of Arran; or the enthusiasm with which the artist returned to his work? It is sufficient to say that in the days of his success he forgot past injuries, and that when he found the early love had revived, he was able to take Harris to his heart as a brother.

A T ST PETERSBURG.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

I STARTED for St Petersburg just as the winter of '58 set in; that means, the last steamer that could navigate the Baltic had left some days. Ice, hard-blocked and impenetrable, had usurped the place of flowing wave and sparkling spray, and visitors to Russia must reach her across the snow-covered country at a cost of nearly £40, instead of £10 or £12. At this critical period it happens that all vehicles are extra crowded. Dilatory beings who leave everything too late, join with those forced by necessity to travel at this inclement season, to render a seat in the irksome, lumbering diligences most difficult to secure. Hence it was that, on arriving post-haste at Berlin, I found there was no getting beyond Konigsberg, the extreme point by rail, for several days. Not expecting such a halt in my wild career, I chafed exceedingly; and hearing the other route through Warsaw was not so much frequented, I determined rather hastily to change my plan. I took the precaution of telegraphing to Warsaw, to inquire if there was a place vacant in the diligence; and receiving a satisfactory reply, I left Berlin by express train, and in due time rushed into the Russian frontier town Granitza.

At the station here my luggage was examined, and considerable astonishment exhibited by the examiners as to the purport of a set of boxing-gloves I had taken with me. It was evidently the first introduction of these plump assailants to the official eye, and much gabbling and gesticulation ensued thereon. At last an appeal was made to my amused self. My stock of German being then confined within extremely narrow limits, I was reduced to expressing myself in pantomime, and inserting my hand in one of the gloves, gave a comic lunge at the most perplexed-looking of the party. This produced a roar of laughter from the group, and appeared to afford most serene elucidation, for my box was closed, and the keys consigned to my care at once. My books, however,

which consisted of some highly dangerous and seductive German grammars, exercises, dictionaries, and some numbers of Chambers's *Information for the People*, were all taken from me, and despatched, with fitting mystery and routine, to the Censor Office at Warsaw.

Arrived at Warsaw, my first impulse was to hurry to the diligence-office, and secure my place. As I hastened on, brilliant ideas flitted across my mind of being nice in my choice of seat, of bestowing upon the driver an amicable *pour-boire*, of winning over my *compagnons de voyage* by delicate attentions—of, in fact, doing everything I could to make my seven days' northern journey as far removed from penance as I could. Let my readers imagine the total revolution I experienced on being told, in answer to my impatient appeal, that there was no place for three weeks—positively for three weeks! Three weeks in Varsovie, with no particular sentiment connected with it save what might hang about the Varsoviana and a certain Thaddeus, who has been forgotten long and long ago! Three weeks to be drawled out, day after day, in all their debilitating listlessness, to be spent in a dreary, comfortless hotel, situated in a worn-out, tumble-down old town, every atom of its vitality crushed out of it by the iron grasp of a triumphant oppressor. I was no great smoker—I was no great drinker—I could not concentrate my energies on epicurean researches—I had no particular fancy for dangling after a pretty girl, and ogling her—I could not speak German with the upper classes—I could not speak Polish with the lower classes—I could not read without any books—and it was too cold to make excursions in the neighbourhood. Whether the telegram I received at Berlin was purposely or accidentally wrong, I never could discover; but wrong it was, and I had nothing for it but to reduce myself to calm endurance as quickly as I could. I tried to occupy myself with walking about the town, but snow was everywhere in annihilating quantities; smells were everywhere in emulous profusion; the streets were narrow, frightfully paved, and slippery in the extreme, and I was forced to content myself with seeing life through the hotel windows. It was somewhat novel, at first, to see Cossacks on patrol, their costume à la Turque, their appearance imposingly ferocious. It was somewhat novel, at first, to see peasants flocking by in sheep-skin coats, looking precisely as though cloth was scarce and door-mats plentiful. It was somewhat novel, at first, to see the richer population, who seemed three-fourths Jews, wearing beards of Oriental length, fur-coats reaching to the ground, fur-boots as high up as the knee, and fur-caps coming close upon the eyes. It was somewhat novel, at first, to see boys of fourteen drinking tumblers of spirits without a vestige of a wince. But the faces of the people were nearly hidden by tangled masses of drooping hair; where they could be seen, they were puffed and swollen with unceasing drunkenness; themselves and their clothing were pestiferous with dirt; and beyond their exterior I could not go. I possessed not the language-key to unlock their hearts. Most unenviably were my hours frittered away, and though I had had my books at last returned to me (after paying two roubles for their transit, and it had been duly ascertained that they were not calculated to propagate and foster any revolutionary notions), most thankful indeed was I when, at the end of thirteen days, a seat in the diligence was unexpectedly vacant, and I exchanged my Varsovian captivity for its wearisome but welcome confinement.

Muffled up in furs like a native, and wedged into my limited accommodation, I was off. It was something to feel I was leaving Warsaw behind me, and at last setting out for my much-wished destination; but it was only the remembrance of my tedious and aggravating stoppage that could make my situation

tolerable. England, four or five centuries ago, may probably have been in the same state I found Russia. When we were skimming over hard snow it was well enough, but every now and then—notwithstanding we had ten horses, and sometimes twelve or more—we stuck fast in masses of it that had drifted with the wind, or fallen by its own weight from neighbouring heights; and then we saw despotism in its true colours. Our guard would seize any skin-clad peasants who were passing near, and force them to dig us out. If any hesitation were exhibited, he would point to his sword, and men and women, old and young, were obliged to leave their occupations, and set to with wooden shovels, tipped with iron—their constant companions—till we were slowly and sullenly released. We would go on again across flat plains, with no hills to diversify the prospect, and nothing but snow everywhere. Then we would come near a gloomy forest, outside which a guard of Cossacks would be waiting with their long lances gleaming in the sun. Escorted by these, we passed through the tall dark pines in safety, and then we would come to a bridgeless river, frozen hard as iron, except where the ice was broken up to admit a floating barge, on which our diligence was placed, when soldiers dragged it bodily across. This kind of transit was repeated several times, day after day, night after night; but we came to a river at last too wide for this, and too tightly frozen, where another diligence was waiting for us on the opposite side, so we walked over the ice, and took fresh seats, whilst our luggage was carried across, and packed up anew. This was our only change for five days. We slept and we woke, cooped up in our tiny compartment; we ate and we drank there, sometimes such provisions as we carried with us, sometimes such food as we could obtain at the miserable inns on our route. At the end of the fifth day we reached Abskoff, 200 miles from the capital, to which place the rail was finished, and in twelve hours more we were deposited in St Petersburgh.

Snow, sledges, and silence—Sir John Franklin and the Arctic voyagers; these were the first impressions and the unbidden associations. Snow everywhere, sledges everywhere, silence everywhere. There was the sound of voices, to be sure, but the usual rattle of a populous city was hushed, till summer should put wheels into use once more. Like Venice, the Bride of the Sea, Petersburg, the Bride of the Snow, gives no echo as her children hurry on. And in St Petersburg the hurry seems excessive. Sledges are hastening in every direction. One-horse sledges, two-horse sledges, three-horse sledges; the whole population seems in sledges. Swiftly they skim along the snow; and here stands a horse which has been so furiously driven, that its hair is stiffened with frozen perspiration, and it looks like a marble statue of itself.

Here, on the frozen Neva, on the very Neva itself, two feet thick with solid ice, imprisoning in its relentless grasp tall-masted ships, is a troika race. The course is marked by a bank of snow some four feet high, and is embellished by a 'Grand Stand,' in which the élite of the imperial city sit. Only two troikas start—a troika is a three-horse sledge—one on each side of the course; and a man on horseback gallops by the horses' heads, and urges them to swiftness.

On the Neva, too, is a well-formed road, marked out by posts, from which are swinging small oil-lamps; and half-way across is a wooden watch-house for policemen, who have for headgear a helmet garnished with ornaments like little pepper-boxes, and who wear, slung from their necks, revolvers in leather cases. Here is an incident purely Russian. An alarm has been raised, at one of the theatres near the river—it is Carnival-time, and theatres are open in the day—that a man has been robbed of his purse, containing many roubles. To prevent the robber's escape, Russian

ingenuity can suggest no more skilful a manoeuvre than locking all the doors. The offender is to be detected by an equally cunning device. The audience are led off in batches, by the armed policemen, to this watch-house on the Neva, and searched. As the examination of each person is finished, and the missing property is not discovered, he is at liberty to depart in peace. After three hours passed in this indiscriminate and fruitless investigation, Russian wisdom arrives at the conclusion a false alarm has been raised, and the would-be prosecutor is marched off to prison as a proper penalty for giving policemen unnecessary trouble.

Hardly more primitive than this are the Laplanders grouped about the Neva, who always crowd down to St Petersburg in winter-time, to make their purchases, and earn a little money. These Laplanders differ from the poorest Russians, in being shorter, thicker, broader, dirtier, and wearing the skin of deer instead of sheep. They pitch their tents on the frozen river, and gain enough money to make their long journey profitable, by exhibiting themselves, and letting out their sledges for short runs up and down the ice. They figure, in this way, at the Carnival, much as gypsies do at our country-fairs. Their sledges are drawn by deer—four abreast—which are about the same size and colour as our donkeys; and, indeed, their horns being generally sawn off for sale, they join with their masters in suggesting Blackheath and its diversions, by galloping back to their starting-places with all the ardour of their asinine prototypes. The Laplander drives his sledge by stirring up the deer with a long pole till they gallop their quickest, when he exchanges his wild run at their side for a theatrical leap on to the sledge; and after performing his *cours*, he invites his customers to enter his tent. Here his wife and family are squatting, like wild beasts in a den, which idea is admirably carried out by the judicious display of an uncooked bone—possibly a mere dramatic ‘property’—from which it is to be supposed they have just been gnawing the flesh.

Close upon the Neva, too, fronting the Winter Palace, is the ‘Balagan,’ or Great Fair. Here, combined with a general resemblance to similar festivities at home, we find several foreign features. Most prominent of all is the disgusting smell emitted from the crowds of frowzy sheep-skins; which odour is rendered more conspicuous, perhaps, by the utter absence of tobacco-fumes, and the aroma of cigars. Smoking is strictly forbidden in the open air, and is liable to a penalty of a rouble for every offence—a fine which is diligently enforced, for the simple reason, that it is allowed to find its way into the pocket of the detector. Next to this olfactory perception of novelty, comes, perhaps, the wonder at the number of nations represented. Circassians in their picturesque costume, with daggers at their waists; Tatars with their heads shaved, and covered with round fur turbans; Fins, Swedes, Poles, Prussians, Danes, Austrians, French, and English, adopting the Russian dress of course, but easily distinguishable by their appearance and conversation. Add to these the many different costumes of the Russians themselves, remember that women wear thick padded, shapeless bonnets, like those with which our village children hide their faces from the sun, and some notion may be formed of the Balagans in Russland. One link there is that joins the mass together—a universal belief in nuts as a satisfactory refreshment. Every one is eating nuts, and each seems bent on eating more than his neighbour. A sharp competition prevails, and the preliminary cracking produces almost the effect of artillery. Nuts reign absolutely vice gilt gingerbread dethroned—not a vestige of which is to be seen anywhere. But there are shows of every kind as with us—travelling menageries, theatres, and peep-shows; and among them, distinguished from the others by flaming capitals, ‘The Chinese Knife

Conjurors from Drury Lane.’ Nor is Punch and Judy absent, although it differs slightly from its English namesake. The familiar curtained oblong, with the mimic stage atop, is changed for a roofless triangular erection, above the edge of which the tiny personages of the drama are held. Merry-go-rounds are present in all their glory. Surely there must be some singular fascination in being whirled on a legless horse round a circle; for here are bearded moujiks in frantic appreciation of the delight, lashing their wooden steeds with ruthless vigour, and excitedly uttering the shrill, sharp cries of a driver’s vocabulary. But the Muscovite variety of this amusement is more attractive still. It is obtained by substituting boats for horses; and the required velocity for the rotatory predilections of the Russ is obtained by working machinery from underneath, on the same method by which the King of Naples was nightly wrecked when the *Tempest* raged at the Royal Princess’s Theatre. An appendage to this amusement is the Russian clown, who appears in sheep-skin, with a hempen wig, and a beard which reaches to his waist. He declaims, in his native Russki, the praises of his particular diversion; and it certainly is the merriest, the liveliest, the softest, the quickest, the most delightful of any in the Balagans. The revellers cannot withstand his persuasiveness; so in they go, and round and round they twirl, in most complete disregard to bale or any of its contingencies; whilst a military band plays popular tunes, soldiers sing national songs, and a dozen girls or more keep dancing in a perpetual circle, waving white handkerchiefs over their heads, till the spectator reels with giddiness. Very distinctive features in the scene are the swarms of firemen who are always on the alert, with monstrous axes thrust through their girdles, wherewith to hew down tents and booths in case of oft-recurring and all-appalling fire.

Retreating a little from the other pastimes, stand the ice-hills. These are simply no hills at all, but artificial slopes of wood, to which people ascend by tall turret-stairs, and which are covered with ice, and rendered not unlike a fire-escape by little walls of snow. At the foot of the stairs is hired a light and tiny sledge, which might more properly be styled a full-sized skate; and slinging this on his back, the visitor mounts the stairs. Arrived on the platform at the top, he seats himself on his sledge, and giving himself an impetus, rushes down the plain. This is achieved with more or less *éclat* according to the skilfulness and speed exhibited. Much practice is necessary to do it to perfection. The weight must be poised, and a certain expertness is needful, to avoid contact with fellow-practitioners, who may come crashing on their predecessor’s back and cause a very undignified conclusion. Here is a novice at the exhilarating diversion. He presses too much on one side, he is overturned and is lying partially imbedded in the snow-bank, his sledge assisting most annoyingly at his entombment. But the game is diversified by some brilliant performances. Here is a gentleman standing on his sledge, and he skims down the slope with the rapidity of a steam-engine. Here is another, gallantly disposed, who has a lady seated behind him, and he steers her bravely to the level. Here comes a third with an original idea for distinction—he performs the journey kneeling. But see the crowning feat of all! A Russian engages two sledges, and places one foot on each; he impels himself forward, and is going swiftly down the incline. He is closely followed by a friend sitting on his sledge in the ordinary method. Just as No. 1 reaches the middle of the incline, he is overtaken by No. 2, and in a second pushes his sledge so far apart that No. 2, by an adroit lowering of his head, clears the human bridge in one triumphant slide. No. 1 immediately brings his feet together again, and reaches the level a moment only after his confederate, amidst the

shouts and cheers of the spectators. A rare pastime this for warming the blood of the Muscovite, which would otherwise run a chance of freezing in the biting cold. It is this artificial warmth, perhaps, that gives custom to the ice-dealers, who effect brisk sales; for which it would be difficult otherwise to account. The beverage most in vogue, however, is hot tea, carried by the sellers in enormous jugs, and drunk invariably from glasses.

I now leave the Muscovites to their fun, and take a walk about the city. Here is a sight *sui generis*—the Frozen Market; every eatable frozen to the extremity of hardness, and yet selling with perfect readiness. Here are to be seen most human-looking pigs, demurely seated on their tasty haunches; huge bullocks standing on all-fours, as though they were still alive, and wanted but the driver's goad to put them on the march once more; others chopped in half, and lying on the ground like portions of old canoes; sheep in flocks as in the fields; fish tilted on their tails; fowls and other birds arranged in piles; vegetables stocked in pyramids like cannon-balls. Everything, in short, looking so comically unlike itself, that laughter is excited on every side.

But daylight is going fast. A winter's day in Russia lasts only from eight o'clock till two, when darkness comes on apace. I determine to go indoors, and it is well I do so, for as I enter my habitation I am politely told by a passer-by my nose is frost-bitten—the height of courtesy in Russia—and before I cross the threshold I apply the usual remedy, a little snow. As I put my hands to my face I discover my nostrils filled with ice, and my eyebrows overlaid with frost, a crown-piece thick! Truly, we English have no idea what winter is! I enter the house and am perfectly astounded at the heat. Yes; the heat. Russian houses are kept so very hot that there is a difference of forty degrees between out of doors and in; and I soon found the flannel shirts and waistcoats I had taken with me altogether useless. The clothing worn indoors, in the coldest weather, is of quite a cool description; evening-dress being freely used. This artificial heat owes its existence to the immense stove which is such a feature in Russian houses. It is a tall column of iron, with pipes from it extending in all directions. There are square valves opening from the pipes, resembling our patent ventilators, and from these are emitted overpowering gushes of hot air. The monotony of heat, so to speak, that thus prevails, is at first quite distressing. For a few days after my arrival I suffered considerably from thirst; I was perpetually drinking, and had all the symptoms of a fever. Cold, in Russia, is the natural enemy, not the invigorating refreshener it is in England; a breath of air never purifies a Russian dwelling during the entire winter, which lasts for nine months in the year—from August until May. The double windows are kept fast closed, and there exists no other means of ventilation, for since there are no open fireplaces there can be no health-bestowing chimneys; a fact from which important sanitary results might be argued.

I take off my heavy pelisse, and dress for dinner; for there is a dinner-party in the house to-day, and I am invited to it. As I enter the *salle-à-manger*, the first view of the dinner-table is exceedingly pretty. It appears to be decked with vases of richly coloured flowers, but on closer inspection the flowers prove to be delicious fruit. Clusters of golden oranges are grouped with ruby-coloured apples, delicate-tinted pears and shining lemons light up the bouquets here and there; encircling these are deep-green leaves, and drooping from the vases are bunches of luscious grapes, both white and purple. The whole arrangements of the table are extremely nice. The cooking is excellent, and copied from the French. There is not much that differs from ordinary fare upon the table, except rabbit—*un petit oiseau*, a delicious little bird, with a somewhat bitter

taste, that feeds on mulberries, and is served roasted, with mulberry-preserve.

At the close of the repast, it is a quaint sight to see the children of my host and hostess approach their parents with much solemnity, kiss their hands, and thank them for the meal; and as I see the stately kiss imprinted on their foreheads in return, I wonder if a mother's love never revels in more fond caresses, but exists in such cold propriety.

But there are *slaves* within the room! Affection cannot leap her highest when surrounded—as one always is in Russia—with such a brutalising fact. The present emperor is doing all he can to remedy the evil, and Heaven knows what a heritage of love he may leave his people; but as Russia now is, it is a living swarm of serfs. There are serfs for porters, serfs for valets, serfs for waiters, serfs for 'boots,' serfs for messengers, serfs for footmen; serfs, in fact, for every office that can be devised. These serfs are mostly Tatars. They wear their hair very long, and parted down the middle; they wear also their beards and moustaches; and if asked why they do not shave, reply, with almost Eastern submission: 'God gave us a beard to wear, and we wear it accordingly.' Such of the serfs as do not belong to the masters they are serving, receive a trifling wage and their clothing; but a third of the few roubles they earn must be given to their lords, as compensation for allowing them to be in service instead of working on their lands. The chief source, however, of a serf's emolument are the gifts at New-year's Day, which amount to a considerable sum. Indeed, it becomes quite a tax to the donors. On New-year's Day, the shops are all kept closed, or rather, they are only opened for an hour or two, when crowds of greasy dirty serfs take them all by storm, and for the remotest vestige of a service, expect pecuniary return. In private houses, it is just the same. I have my little *levée* like the rest. I seat myself at a table, with a heap of paper roubles at my side. These notes (a rouble is 3s. 4d.) are but dirty torn pieces of paper, to which it is difficult to attach the meaning of *money*, and one parts with them, consequently, without consideration. 'Matoei Starrei,' I call out. He comes in, he 'bobs' his head, he wishes me a new year and new luck ('*Suovo godame*, &c.), and stands expectant. I take from the pile a three-rouble note and give it him. There is a delighted repetition of the 'bob,' and I desire him to send in Nicholi. Nicholi is a youth, and this is probably his first year of service. He enters, and makes his bow; and then his faculties are absorbed in looking at the paper roubles, and wondering how many will fall into his particular pocket. He suddenly recollects he has forgotten the proper compliments, and stammers out his 'Suovo godame' with much contrition. Three roubles to him, and he retires well pleased. Then Cousma enters. He is one of the shoeblacks. His eyes twinkle; he gives his trousers a pull, and looks uncomfortable, for he is very shy. One rouble for him, and please send Alexi. Alexi is the most comical-looking Tatar in the house. He has no neck, his shoulders are very high, his head is square, and his ears stick out most prominently; but to atone for his peculiar ugliness, Nature has given him a pair of magnificent eyes. As he comes in, those black lustrous eyes of his fall at once upon the pile of notes. His face twitches nervously, and he blurts out in inappropriate English—but it is his all, and is used on every occasion—'How do you do?' One rouble for him; and so on till the list is closed. Also at every house I visit, similar calls—though not quite so heavy—are made upon my purse; in fact, no service is rendered by a serf, but there seems an anticipative leer for a bigger gift at the ensuing festival. But this is a digression.

After dinner, I do not linger long. Long enough to smoke papierrottes with the daughters of the house, and to feel the charms of the hostess rapidly

deteriorate on seeing her take snuff at every opportunity; and then I leave for the Bolshoi Theatre, where there is a masquerade.

I find plenty of people in the theatre, but no fun. Dreariness pervades the whole affair. There are two bands of music, one on the stage, and one in the boxes, and they play alternately, but there is no dancing. The women wear masks, the men none, and there is no movement towards merriment or hilarity. Suddenly, an excitement is created; there is a rush towards one corner of the theatre, and much laughter is heard. I go with the press, and find four Frenchmen have entered the theatre, and are dancing with considerable spirit. They are the most odd-looking objects conceivable. They appear to have been split in half, and to have inadvertently joined themselves to somebody else. Half the head, half the face, half the body, one arm, one hand, and one leg are dressed in fashionable evening costume; the corresponding half *en pierrot*. Half the hair is coiffed in the newest style; there is one whisker and half a dainty moustache; the other half is concealed beneath the close cap and white paint of the pierrot. There is one wing of a collar, half a neck-tie, half a shirt-front, and half a waistcoat; and the same line of demarcation is rigidly enforced down to the very feet, one of which is neatly encased in a faultless boot, and the other enjoying glorious liberty in a cotton slipper. As the men turn swiftly round—now as pierrots, now as ‘swells’—the effect is irresistibly comic, and wherever they go, they are followed by a vociferating crowd.

But I soon find this is the only *divertissement* likely to be presented, and I leave the theatre to attend another ball, held at the house of a friend. Here the aspect is very different, and I am just in time to see some Polish students, in their uniform, commence their national mazurka. They select some partners from among the ladies, and begin the dance by sliding and hopping, clinking their heels together, and stamping on the floor. This continues for a quarter of an hour, increasing in vigour every minute, the rest of the company looking on. Half an hour passes, and the dancers are perfectly furious; they shake, they rattle, they stamp, they slide, they kick, they hop, and they jump about with the earnestness and gravity peculiar to a ball-room. The company begin to yawn, the musicians to turn deep crimson. Three-quarters of an hour by my watch, and still going on. Company in bewilderment; musicians in an agony of exertion. The hour goes; no symptom of giving in. Up, down; round, across; in, out; to the right, to the left; turning, twisting, twirling, twining; everything at once, and in most distressing confusion. Company in blank surprise; musicians on the verge of syncope. Another minute, and yet another. Finally, at *ten minutes past the hour*, the dancers, with one impulsive flourish, cease their evolutions, and the musicians mop up the perspiration that is streaming down their faces. *Terpsichore* defend me from such another exhibition!

As I wend my way home, muffled in my schoube, or fur pelisse, I am witness to a street disturbance. A woman is walking along, and a moujik, in passing by her, knocks her down. She has scarcely gained her equilibrium before another movement on the part of the man topples her over once more. The woman scrambles up, and before the man has time to evade her, swears at him in the fiercest Russki, and spits at him right in his face. I see no more; the action is so revolting, I should turn away at any time; but here, in Russia, I have been warned to become embroiled in no street-frays; to be silent as the grave over whatever I may see; and if I am witness to a murder, to pass on without a word. And this is no exaggeration!

Yet another incident is this eventful day to produce before it closes. With fearful suddenness a bright

light appears in the sky, and I find myself wedged in among a crowd of screaming, frantic people. A fire has burst out, and before it can be subdued, eighty-five houses, covering a space three times as large as Grosvenor Square, are levelled to the ground, and hundreds of poor creatures left without a home. Fire is sadly destructive in St Petersburg. The houses are nearly all built of wood, and when flames once burst out, notwithstanding the alarms of the watchmen on the towers, the ravages are generally terrific.

My sleeping-room is at the top of the house, and I am awakened, a few mornings after my arrival, by an alarming noise of scraping and digging over my head. I find, on inquiry, that the noise proceeds from nothing more formidable than an army of serfs on the roofs of the houses, shovelling away at the snow, and hurling it into the streets. This proceeding is partially effected more than once during the winter, otherwise the weight of snow on the house-tops would certainly burst them in.

LEGAL BLUNDERS.

THE chaste and beautiful mauve colour can be obtained from dirty and black coal-tar; bad-smelling substances often form the groundwork of fragrant perfumes. Let us try to get something lively and amusing out of the law, for even out of an odd volume of reports something both amusing and instructive can be obtained; all is not barren from Dan to Beersheba even in Blackstone.

Every person in England, old or young, male or female, is presumed to be conversant with all the legislative enactments of our representatives, directly they come into operation; and further, to be able to interpret, according to law, the true meaning of those sublime creations. Caligula of old was blamed for writing the Roman laws in very small characters, and then sticking them up in exceedingly high places, so that the people could not read them. The British government does not even do so much as he did: it does not hang them up at all. Moreover, from time immemorial acts of parliament have been drawn in a slovenly manner. As vague and unintelligible as an act of parliament, has become now-a-days quite a by-phrase. It is an old saying, that you can drive a coach-and-six through one. Our books of law-reports abound with cases arising solely out of their unintelligibility. Our statute-books are actually encumbered with a multitude of acts repealing parts of acts—acts to amend and explain other acts; and so on. Sheridan used to compare the numerous acts amending the errors of preceding ones, to the story of *The House that Jack built*. First comes an act imposing a tax—then comes an act to amend the act imposing a tax—then comes an act to explain the act for amending the act imposing a tax, followed by another act for remedying the effects of the act imposing a tax; and so on *ad infinitum*.

By an act of 52 Geo. III., the punishment for a term of fourteen years was substituted instead of a pecuniary penalty for making false entries in parish-register books; but the clause directing the division of the penalty was, through some egregious mistake, reinserted, so that, as the act stood as amended, one half of the penalty was to be given to the informer, and the other half to the poor of the parish; that is, seven years' transportation each—a nice inducement to turn informer! Again, Lord Rochester, the wit of Charles II.'s reign, is said to have complied with the directions of an act of parliament, requiring a lamp to be placed over every door, but he would on no account suffer it to be lighted, the act containing no words to that effect! Another act of parliament prohibiting the doing of a certain thing under pain of transportation, contained a clause directing the penalty to be divided

between the king and the informer. An act passed in the beginning of the reign of George III. for the protection of timber-trees, enumerates all the trees which it was supposed would come under that denomination. Seven years afterwards, it was thought necessary to pass another act, adding to the enumeration poplar, alder, larch, maple, and hornbeam trees; so that the knowledge of the person who drew the act, and of the gentlemen who passed it, must have been rather limited. By an act of Edward VI., it was made a capital felony to steal horses. It was not long afterwards considered doubtful whether this included the stealing of a single horse, and an explanatory act had therefore to be passed to settle the matter. In one session nearer our own time, a more ludicrous thing occurred—a law was made subjecting hackney-coachmen to a penalty if they had not a check-string. The worthy Jehus appear to have faithfully complied with the *lex scripta*, but to have artfully retaliated upon their persecutors; for another law had to be made in the following session requiring the coachmen to hold the strings in their hands.

Although the lawyers, as a rule, are extremely careful in drawing legal documents, some very fatal blunders have been made by them. One of the most eminent conveyancing lawyers that ever graced the English bar, once, in drawing a will, made so fatal a mistake that it deprived the party whom he was specially and most anxiously instructed to benefit, of no less a sum than £14,000 a year, and this merely by the omission of the single word 'Gloucester.'* Lord Denman made his own will, and made a mull of it. The late Mr Justice Crowder also drew his own will, but omitted to execute it in proper form. We recollect another rather remarkable blunder made by the lawyers, which happened, comparatively speaking, very recently. Lincoln's Inn was exempted from poor-rates as extra-parochial, and the bounds were set out in a private act of parliament, but, from oversight or carelessness, the lawyers omitted the garden; the consequence was, that the buildings thereon were rated to the poor at £4000 per annum. Another blunder, and a judicial one, too, had rather a curious result. Not many years ago, Lord Chief Baron Pollock, at the Monmouth assizes, in order to get through the business, assigned the trial of several criminal cases to Serjeant Allen, who accordingly took his seat on the bench. When he had disposed of some twelve or fifteen cases, it was discovered that the learned serjeant's name had not been mentioned in the commission, and that consequently his powers as a judge were about as great as those of the crier of the court. All the criminals had therefore to be retried by the Lord Chief Baron, when one of them, who had been sentenced to fifteen years' transportation on his first conviction, escaped with only seven on the second. We will just mention one more instance. In the will of that celebrated millionaire, Mr Arkwright, there is a line perhaps more valuable than any one line that was ever before or will ever again be written: it is—"I bequeath to my son-in-law, Sir R. Wigram, one million sterling." Now, Sir R. Wigram had married Mr Arkwright's daughter; the testator was desirous of benefiting that daughter and her husband, and therefore made the bequest as above stated. I am not aware whether the will was drawn by a professional man or not, but very probably it was. Now, had old Mr Arkwright left the one million sterling to his daughter, instead of her husband, the bequest would have been materially the same, for the husband would have a right to the legacy directly it was paid to the wife. The testator, however, thought proper to give it to his son-in-law, whereupon let us see the consequences. Had the testator bequeathed the money to Lady Wigram, she, being a daughter, would have had £1 per cent. legacy-duty to pay—that would be £10,000;

but having given the legacy to his son-in-law, who was not a blood-relation, £10 per cent. legacy-duty had to be paid, which of course amounted to £100,000. Thus, through ignorance or mistake, the sum of £90,000 was absolutely thrown away by a person who was careful of every farthing he received.

FOOTFALLS ON THE BOUNDARY OF ANOTHER WORLD.

UNDER the above title, Mr R. D. Owen, formerly member of Congress, and American Minister to Naples, has published, in his own country, a volume on so-called supernatural revelations and appearances. A belief in such things—apparently coeval with humanity itself—was thoroughly put out of countenance in the last century, and has long been left to the meanest vulgar. It is now reviving, not only in America, but in this country, with, however, this material difference, that the modern professor of the faith claims for it a legitimate place in the universal frame of things, and presents himself as seeking for the laws under which it is regulated. Mr Owen enters upon his work in this spirit. He collects, in the first place, narratives involving mystic facts which can be well authenticated, and then endeavours to come to some general conclusion as to these partial gleamings from the confines of another world. He discusses in a calm, reasoning way, the opposition to mystic subjects, which appears to rest on a syllogism: the laws of nature being invariable, these facts, which transcend the laws of nature, cannot be true. The proposition of Mr Owen being granted, that the facts are not transgressions of nature's laws, but the result of some wide though unknown law, this objection may be said to fall to the ground. Such is the philosophy of the book.

A large preliminary section is devoted to the phenomena of sleep and dreaming. The author relates anew many of the anecdotes formerly related by Baxter, Carlyon, and Abercrombie, and adds several which he has himself gathered from reputable sources. Of the latter, the following strikes us as the most worthy of notice, seeing that some of the circumstances are very peculiar, and that the narrative is obtained directly from the individual concerned.

'In the winter of 1835-6, a schooner was frozen up in the upper part of the Bay of Fundy, close to Dorchester, which is nine miles from the river Pedeudiac. During the time of her detention, she was intrusted to the care of a gentleman of the name of Clarke, who is at this time captain of the schooner *Julia Hallock*, trading between New York and St Jago de Cuba.

'Captain Clarke's paternal grandmother, Mrs Ann Daws Clarke, to whom he was much attached, was at that time living, and, so far as he knew, well. She was residing at Lyme-Regis, in the county of Dorset, England.

'On the night of the 17th of February 1836, Captain Clarke, then on board the schooner referred to, had a dream of so vivid a character that it produced a great impression upon him. He dreamed that, being at Lyme-Regis, he saw pass before him the funeral of his grandmother. He took note of the chief persons who composed the procession, observed who were the pall-bearers, who were the mourners, and in what order they walked, and distinguished who was the officiating pastor. He joined the procession as it approached the churchyard gate, and proceeded with it to the grave. He thought (in his dream) that the weather was stormy, and the ground wet, as after a heavy rain; and he noticed that the wind, being high, blew the pall partly off the coffin. The graveyard which they entered—the old Protestant one, in the centre of the town—was the same in which, as Captain Clarke knew, their family burying-place was. He perfectly remembered its situation; but, to his

* Newburgh v. Newburgh, decided in House of Lords.

surprise, the funeral procession did not proceed thither, but to another part of the churchyard, at some distance. There (still in his dream) he saw the open grave, partially filled with water, as from the rain; and, looking into it, he particularly noticed floating in the water two drowned field-mice. Afterward, as he thought, he conversed with his mother; and she told him that the morning had been so tempestuous that the funeral, originally appointed for ten o'clock, had been deferred till four. He remarked, in reply, that it was a fortunate circumstance, for, as he had just arrived in time to join the procession, had the funeral taken place in the forenoon, he could not have attended it at all.

'This dream made so deep an impression on Captain Clarke that in the morning he noted the date of it. Some time afterward there came the news of his grandmother's death, with the additional particular that she was buried on the same day on which he, being in North America, had dreamed of her funeral.

'When, four years afterward, Captain Clarke visited Lyme-Regis, he found that every particular of his dream minutely corresponded with the reality. The pastor, the pall-bearers, the mourners, were the same persons he had seen. Yet this, we may suppose, he might naturally have anticipated. But the funeral had been appointed for ten o'clock in the morning, and, in consequence of the tempestuous weather and the heavy rain that was falling, it had been delayed until four in the afternoon. His mother, who attended the funeral, distinctly recollects that the high wind blew the pall partially off the coffin. In consequence of a wish expressed by the old lady shortly before her death, she was buried, not in the burying-place of the family, but at another spot selected by herself; and to this spot Captain Clarke, without any indication from the family or otherwise, proceeded at once, as directly as if he had been present at the burial. Finally, on comparing notes with the old sexton, it appeared that the heavy rain of the morning had partially filled the grave, and that there were actually found in it two field-mice drowned.

'This last incident, even if there were no other, might suffice to preclude all idea of accidental coincidence.

'The above was narrated to me by Captain Clarke himself, with permission to use his name in attestation of its truth.'

Another section gives details as to supposed haunted houses, including several cases with which the public has long been familiar, and a few others, generally of modern date, which are here introduced to English readers for the first time. Of the latter, none involves more curious occurrences, or has been brought forward on better evidence, than the case of the Cideville Parsonage. This is a village and commune in the department of the Seine-Inférieure, about eighty miles north-west of Paris. The date is so recent as 1850, when the parsonage was in the occupation of a simple priest named M. Tinel. With him lived two boys, respectively of twelve and fourteen years of age, with whom, in some way, the mysterious disturbances were apparently connected. These lasted from the 26th November 1850 till the 15th of February ensuing, when the children were removed from the house. The details are given by Mr Owen from the depositions of a great number of witnesses in a legal process which took place in consequence of the disturbances, at the instance of a shepherd who was reputed by the country people as their cause; but they run to such a length as to be inadmissible into these pages.

Another large section of the book is devoted to narratives regarding appearances of people out of the body, both during life and after death—all incredible, according to the reigning code of faith on such subjects, and yet all testified to by direct and weighty evidence. One of the most curious refers to a series of circumstances which have recently occurred in

London, and have been the subject of a good deal of vague rumour.

'In the month of September 1857, Captain G— W—, of the 6th Dragoon Guards, went out to India to join his regiment.

'His wife remained in England, residing at Cambridge. On the night between the 14th and 15th of November 1857, toward morning, she dreamed that she saw her husband looking anxious and ill, upon which she immediately awoke, much agitated. It was bright moonlight; and looking up, she perceived the same figure standing by her bedside. He appeared in his uniform, the hands pressed across the breast, the hair dishevelled, the face very pale. His large dark eyes were fixed full upon her; their expression was that of great excitement, and there was a peculiar contraction of the mouth, habitual to him when agitated. She saw him, even to each minute particular of his dress, as distinctly as she had ever done in her life; and she remembers to have noticed between his hands the white of the shirt-bosom, unstained, however, with blood. The figure seemed to bend forward as if in pain, and to make an effort to speak; but there was no sound. It remained visible, the wife thinks, as long as a minute, and then disappeared.

'Her first idea was to ascertain if she was actually awake. She rubbed her eyes with the sheet, and felt that the touch was real. Her little nephew was in bed with her: she bent over the sleeping child and listened to its breathing; the sound was distinct, and she became convinced that what she had seen was no dream. It need hardly be added that she did not again go to sleep that night.

'Next morning, she related all this to her mother, expressing her conviction, though she had noticed no marks of blood on his dress, that Captain W— was either killed or grievously wounded. So fully impressed was she with the reality of that apparition, that she thenceforth refused all invitations. A young friend urged her, soon afterward, to go with her to a fashionable concert, reminding her that she had received from Malta, sent by her husband, a handsome dress-cloak, which she had never yet worn; but she positively declined, declaring that, uncertain as she was whether she was not already a widow, she would never enter a place of amusement until she had letters from her husband (if, indeed, he still lived) of later date than the 14th of November.

'It was on a Tuesday, in the month of December 1857, that the telegram regarding the actual fate of Captain W— was published in London. It was to the effect that he was killed before Lucknow on the fifteenth of November.

'This news, given in the morning paper, attracted the attention of Mr Wilkinson, a London solicitor, who had in charge Captain W—'s affairs. When, at a later period, this gentleman met the widow, she informed him that she had been quite prepared for the melancholy news, but that she felt sure her husband could not have been killed on the 15th of November, inasmuch as it was during the night between the 14th and 15th that he appeared to herself.'

'The certificate from the War Office, however, which it became Mr Wilkinson's duty to obtain, confirmed the date given in the telegram; its tenor being as follows:

"No. 9579.
1.

WAR OFFICE,
30th January 1858.

"These are to certify that it appears, by the records in this office, that Captain G— W—, of the

* The difference of longitude between London and Lucknow being about five hours, three or four o'clock A.M. in London would be eight or nine o'clock A.M. at Lucknow. But it was in the afternoon, not in the morning, as will be seen in the sequel, that Captain W— was killed. Had he fallen on the 15th, therefore, the apparition to his wife would have appeared several hours before the engagement in which he fell, and while he was yet alive and well.'

6th Dragoon Guards, was killed in action on the 15th November 1857.

(Signed) "B. HAWES."

"While Mr Wilkinson's mind remained in uncertainty as to the exact date, a remarkable incident occurred, which seemed to cast further suspicion on the accuracy of the telegram and of the certificate. That gentleman was visiting a friend, whose lady has all her life had perception of apparitions, while her husband is what is usually called an impulsive medium; facts which are known, however, only to their intimate friends. Though personally acquainted with them, I am not at liberty to give their names. Let us call them Mr and Mrs N—."

"Mr Wilkinson related to them, as a wonderful circumstance, the vision of the captain's widow in connection with his death, and described the figure as it had appeared to her. Mrs N—, turning to her husband, instantly said: 'That must be the very person I saw, the evening we were talking of India, and you drew an elephant with a howdah on his back. Mr Wilkinson has described his exact position and appearance; the uniform of a British officer, his hands pressed across his breast, his form bent forward as if in pain. The figure,' she added to Mr W—, 'appeared just behind my husband, and seemed looking over his left shoulder.'

"Did you attempt to obtain any communication from him?" Mr Wilkinson asked.

"Yes; we procured one through the medium of my husband."

"Do you remember its purport?"

"It was to the effect that he had been killed in India that afternoon, by a wound in the breast; and adding, as I distinctly remember: 'That thing I used to go about in is not buried yet.' I particularly remarked the expression."

"When did this happen?"

"About nine o'clock in the evening, several weeks ago; but I do not recollect the exact date."

"Can you not call to mind something that might enable you to fix the precise day?"

"Mrs N— reflected. 'I remember nothing,' she said at last, 'except that while my husband was drawing, and I was talking to a lady-friend who had called to see us, we were interrupted by a servant bringing in a bill for some German vinegar, and that, as I recommended it as being superior to English, we had a bottle brought in for inspection.'

"Did you pay the bill at the time?"

"Yes; I sent out the money by the servant."

"Was the bill receipted?"

"I think so; but I have it up stairs, and can soon ascertain."

"Mrs N— produced the bill. Its receipt bore the *fourteenth* of November!"

"This confirmation of the widow's conviction as to the day of her husband's death produced so much impression on Mr Wilkinson, that he called at the office of Messrs Cox and Greenwood, the army agents, to ascertain if there was no mistake in the certificate. But nothing there appeared to confirm any surmise of inaccuracy. Captain W—'s death was mentioned in two separate dispatches of Sir Colin Campbell; and in both the date corresponded with that given in the telegram.

"So matters rested, until, in the month of March 1858, the family of Captain W— received from Captain G— C—, then of the Military Train, a letter dated near Lucknow, on the 19th December 1857. This letter informed them that Captain W— had been killed before Lucknow, while gallantly leading on the squadron, not on the 15th of November, as reported in Sir Colin Campbell's dispatches, but on the *fourteenth*, in the afternoon. Captain C— was riding close by his side at the time he saw him fall. He was struck by a fragment of shell in the breast, and never spoke after he was hit. He was buried at

the Dilkoosha; and on a wooden cross erected by his friend, Lieutenant R— of the 9th Lancers, at the head of his grave, are cut the initials G. W., and the date of his death, the 14th of November 1857.

"The War Office finally made the correction as to the date of death, but not until more than a year after the event occurred. Mr Wilkinson, having occasion to apply for an additional copy of the certificate in April 1859, found it in exactly the same words as that which I have given, only that the 14th of November had been substituted for the 15th.

"This extraordinary narrative was obtained by me directly from the parties themselves. The widow of Captain W— kindly consented to examine and correct the manuscript, and allowed me to inspect a copy of Captain C—'s letter, giving the particulars of her husband's death. To Mr Wilkinson, also, the manuscript was submitted, and he assented to its accuracy so far as he is concerned. That portion which relates to Mrs N— I had from that lady herself. I have neglected no precaution, therefore, to obtain for it the warrant of authenticity.

"It is perhaps the only example on record where the appearance of what is usually termed a ghost proved the means of correcting an erroneous date in the dispatches of a commander-in-chief, and of detecting an inaccuracy in the certificate of a War Office."

THE UPLAND PATH.

WISE men—or such as to the world seem wise,
Picture old age the downhill path of Life,
Dimmed by the vapours of a lower earth,
Drawn from its stagnant waters. Nay, not so;
But, rather, upward where the mountains stand
Guarding the young green valleys, lies his way
On whose broad front is set the crown of years.
Silent, and filled with beauty, shall he go,
As one who travels towards the source of streams,
And, pondering thoughtfully, comes unaware
On landlocked tarns, whose stilly waters keep
The face of heaven in memory! Far below,
The maddening rivers keep the seas in chase,
Till the vexed ocean beats the curbing shore;
And, striving still for mastery, the rough winds
Grapple the yielding argosies. Not for him
Sounds their wild roar amid his calm of skies.
Save when, perchance, some shriek of human woe
Leaps to the clouds that roll beneath his feet,
Touching the common nature in his heart,
Unmoved he stands, and, in a trance of soul,
'Mid God-ward dreams, between the rifted peaks
Beholds the face Divine. So, pressing on,
Higher and higher still, and breathing still
A clearer, purer air, he comes at length
To earth's last foothold, and stands face to face
With the great Change! Undaunted, undismayed,
Though round him close the everlasting hills,
And darkness falls upon him as a shroud,
He casts his feeble frame on Nature's heart,
That beats to his again; then, heavenward-bound,
Sets firm his foot upon the Path of Souls.

E. L. HERVEY.

On Saturday, July 7, will be commenced in this Journal,
A ROMANCE BY CAPTAIN MAYNE REID, ENTITLED
THE WILD HUNTRESS,
To be continued every week until completed.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH. Also sold by WILLIAM ROBERTSON, 23 Upper Sackville Street, DUBLIN, and all Booksellers.